

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (original) A switching system including a switching unit and a line concentrator,

said switching unit comprising:

a number-analyzing unit that analyzes a dial number notified through said line concentrator; and

a line-selecting unit that selects lines that are accommodated by said line concentrator and are connected to other line concentrators, and

said line concentrator comprising a line-connecting unit that connects said lines,

wherein said line-selecting unit selects the lines and directs said line-connecting unit to connect said lines together when said number-analyzing unit determines that said dial number is used for connecting said line concentrator to the other line concentrators, thereby connecting said line concentrator to the other line concentrators.

Claim 4 (original) The switching system as claimed in claim 3, wherein said line concentrator further comprises a signal-transmitting unit transmitting an overcrowding-process signal through a signal path to said switching unit when a communication path provided between said line concentrator and said switching unit is determined to be overcrowded, wherein said switching unit further comprises a signal-receiving unit receiving the overcrowding-process

signal from said signal-transmitting unit, and an overcrowding-control unit directing said line-connecting unit to connect said lines when said signal-receiving unit receives the overcrowding-process signal from said signal-transmitting unit, thereby connecting said line concentrator to the other line concentrators.

Claim 5 (original) The switching system as claimed in claim 3, wherein said switching unit further comprises a number-analysis table including trunk-group numbers initially registered for dial numbers that are used for connecting the line concentrator to the other line concentrators, and a line-selection table including a chain of idle trunks corresponding to a trunk-group number selected from said number-analysis table by said number-analyzing unit by use of said dial number and to a line-concentrator number of the line concentrator accessed by said dial number, wherein said line-selecting unit selects an idle trunk connecting said lines from said line-selection table by use of said trunk-group number and said line-concentrator number.

Claim 6 (canceled)